

Joe Kimball, *MinnPost*

St. Paul is buying an electric car - a Ford Transit Connect - for its city fleet, and will display the new vehicle Tuesday.

City officials say St. Paul is one of the first cities in the nation to put an electric car into use, and the city is scheduled to get two more later this year.

Recharging the batteries has long been a logistical problem for electric cars, but now Drive Electric Minnesota - a partnership of local and state government, Xcel Energy, private business and nonprofit groups - plans to install 30 charging stations throughout the metro area in ramps, flat lots and on-street locations.

Gov. Mark Dayton, Congresswoman Betty McCollum, St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman and Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak are scheduled to appear at the 10 a.m. unveiling at RiverCentre in downtown St. Paul.

City officials say they're using \$286,000 in stimulus funds for the electric vehicles and charging stations. Xcel Energy also is helping cities, government agencies and businesses buy electric vehicles.